<u>REMARKS</u>

Claims 1 to 17 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1 and 8 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 7 to 9, 11 and 14 were objected to for various informalities. Claims 1 to 3, 7 to 10 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Applicant submits that the claims as the objection and rejection have been addressed by the foregoing amendments. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,385,728 (DeBry) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,424,429 (Takahashi). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

The present invention concerns controlling a printing system. In the system, an information processing apparatus specifies a terminal device in which a document is stored in accordance with a print request from one of a plurality of terminal devices, and instructs the specified terminal device to transfer print data to a designated printer. Using the present invention, it is possible to simplify processing compared with a case where the apparatus processes a plurality of documents, because the document is transferred to the printer without passing the image information through the apparatus. Moreover, it is possible to construct an information processing apparatus using a less expensive computer compared with the case where the documents are passing through the apparatus. As a result, printing can be preformed efficiently by a plurality of terminal devices coupled to a plurality of printers via a communication network.

Turning to specific claim language, amended independent Claim 1 is directed to an information processing apparatus for instructing a specified terminal device of a plurality of terminal devices connected via a network to transfer image information to a printer in response to a print request from one of the plurality of terminal devices. The apparatus includes: a specifying unit adapted to specify a terminal device, in which the image information to be printed has been stored in accordance with the print request, wherein the print request includes information for designating the printer as a print destination; a first designating unit adapted to instruct the terminal device specified by said specifying unit to transfer the image information to the printer designated as the print destination without passing the image information through the information processing apparatus; and a management unit adapted to manage record information including a printing date indicating the printing was performed by the printer based on the instruction by said first designating unit.

In contrast, DeBry discloses that a user sends a print request to a document source which stores the document to be printed. The user acquires a certificate from the document source and sends the print request to the print server based on the certificate (including the path to the document file). The print server acquires the document from the document source based on the certificate. Finally, the print server makes a printer connected to the print server print the document. As can be seen from DeBry, the document to be printed must pass through the print server that is processing the print request. In the present invention, the image information is transferred directly from the terminal device to the printer without passing through the information processing apparatus.

In a like manner, Takahashi discloses that server 12 manages document data and documents by passing the document through the server (See Takahashi, Abstract and Column 12, lines 13 to 42). Therefore, Takahashi fails to provide that which is missing from DeBry, namely transferring the image information to the printer designated as the print destination without passing the image information through the information processing apparatus .

In light of the deficiencies of DeBry and Takahashi as discussed above, Applicant submits that amended independent Claim 1 is now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.
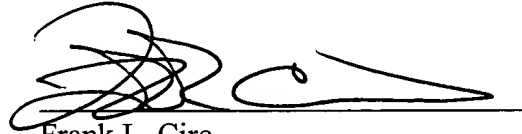
Amended independent Claim 8 is directed to a method substantially in accordance with the apparatus of Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claim 8 is also now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed allowable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the allowability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at

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Respectfully submitted,

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